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Tampa writer asks trial in JFK assassination case

By TOM RAUM
Times Staff Writer

Tampa writer Kerry W. Thornley today called for New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison to bring him to trial, so he might have the same chance to clear his name that was afforded to another charged in Garrison's probe of the John Kennedy assassination, Clay Shaw.

Thornley, who has been charged by Garrison with lying about an alleged association with Lee Harvey Oswald in New Orleans in the months prior to the presidential assassination, said he felt Shaw's acquittal Saturday further pointed to his own innocence.

But, said Thornley, "I want an opportunity to go into court to answer charges which are utterly ridiculous."

The writer, who was a Marine Corps friend of Lee Harvey Oswald, purported assassin of Kennedy, complained that he had been available for trial since his arraignment in New Orleans last April, "but Garrison has yet to set a trial date."

Thornley said he had heard rumors that Garrison would be "out to get me" if his prosecution of Shaw failed, but discounted them on the grounds that "I don't think Garrison wanted either the Clay Shaw case or my case to get to trial."

It was all just a big "propaganda campaign," charged Thornley, but Garrison unexpectedly had his bluff called when forced to

actually go to trial with Shaw, Thornley claimed.

However, Thornley said he had no way of anticipating Garrison's next move. "He's very unpredictable, nothing he might do would surprise me."

Shaw, charged with conspiring with Oswald in New Orleans to assassinate President Kennedy, was acquitted Saturday following a lengthy, much-publicized trial.

Garrison's forces have suggested that Thornley on several occasions posed as Oswald while the two were in New Orleans.

Thornley has vigorously denied that he posed as his former friend, or that he even knew Oswald was in the city while he (Thornley) worked as a French Quarter waiter in 1963.

The writer, who published the book "Oswald" in 1965, was stationed with Oswald at a Marine Corps base at El Toro, Calif., in 1959. He denies seeing Oswald since.

Thornley said that Garrison had earlier claimed Shaw, as a prominent New Orleans businessman, had helped Thornley publish another book about Oswald — an earlier novel. However, the district attorney dropped that theory when he learned that the book was never published, Thornley said.

The writer also charged that Garrison's "propaganda mill" has circulated rumors that he posed as Oswald for a picture which appeared on the cover of Life magazine shortly after the assassination. "Now something like that could be easily proved or disproved," said Thornley.